

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, July 21. 1709.

I Have given my Reasons, whether they please you or no, Why, we may, with Safety to our Commerce, and real Advantage to the Colonies themselves, send any Number of People to our Plantations on the Continent of *America*—— I am now, according to my propos'd Method, to tell you, why you cannot do so to our Island Colonies, which some People are mighty fond of, regarding rather their Zeal to be rid of the present Burthen, as they would have it be thought, of the Refugees, now upon our Hands, than either the Good of the poor People, or of the Colonies to whom they would send them.

We are to consider our Islands in two Capacities. 1. As to their maintaining the

Inhabitants that settle there; and, 2. As to the Labour of the Poor among them.

As to the Maintenance of the People, it is evident in all our Island Colonies, the Inhabitants are subsisted by their Trade, not by their Produce—— I do not say, the Soil is not fruitful enough to subsist its Inhabitants—— But the Produce of the Soil, being much more valuable than the bare Necessaries for Subsistence of the People would be, is apply'd to Commerce; and it is well worth their while to take up their Land, in the planting such Fruits as will export to *England*, and sell for a great Price; and then with Part of the Money of that Produce purchase Corn, Cattle, and all Sorts of Provision.

And

And here, by the way, is an unanswerable Testimony of its being a Nation's Interest, to put every Inch of Land to the highest possible Improvement, and to fill the Country, if possible, so full of People, that the whole Kingdom could only serve to make their Gardens and Stable-Yards.

Barbadoes is one of the richest and most fertile Soils now in the World, if I may venture upon the Accounts given of it, and of other Places, compar'd——Yet the Produce of the Ground, employ'd either in feeding Cattle or planting Corn——Would not subsist one third Part of the Inhabitants that now live upon it——nor amount to one twentieth Part of the Value of what it now produces——In this I speak, I believe, so much within Compass, that I presume, I need not descend to Particulars, or go about to justify it.

The Produce being so rich, it is no Burthen to them to have more People than they can feed, but infinitely their Advantage; they maintain 50000 Slaves and Servants, they support a most intollerable Luxury and Gallantry, they live at a prodigious Expence, they maintain their own Government, and remit to *England* a vast Wealth every Year——It is no Grievance, but a Gain to them, that they do not sow Corn enough to feed their Cocks and Hens, that they have no Horses for their Work, Oxen for their Flesh, or Swine for Pork, nor Food for them, if they had them there; it is infinitely their Gain to send to *Ireland* for Beef, to *Virginia* for Pork, *New York* for Peas and Flower, *New England* for Horses, and to *Old England* for Beer, besides buying all their Clothes and Necessaries from hence——And this is the Reason of their vast Number of People.

This is a full Proof, that no Nation, that has a rich Produce, can have too many People; and if *England* was as full of People, as the Land of *Canaan* was, they would be rich in Proportion——But this by the way.

But in these Islands what shall these poor People do?——The Islands consist of Merchants, Planters, and Servants——Merchants we cannot suppose these poor People to be——Planters they cannot be,

for that requires Stock and Land, which is very dear——And as to being Servants, it is evident, That the Work of the Islands, which is the planting Canes, and making Sugar, whether in the Field or in the Sugar-Works, is of that Nature, the Labour so severe, the Climate so hot, the Food so coarse, that no *Europeans* were ever yet found that go could thro' it——At least to the Profit of the Planter——They must have People us'd to the Extremities of the Weather, entirely subjected to the Government and Correction of the cruellest Masters; that they may be whip'd forward like Horses, that can live on what is next to the Offall of Food, like Beasts, and never knew better; that have the Strength of the Ox, and knew no more of Liberty; and that suffer every thing the Horse suffers, but being dead when they are dead, which would be done too, if they could get 6d. for the Hide——These they get their Wealth from——And these, I doubt, they have much to answer about, as to Cruelties and Barbarities; which it is not my present Work to enquire into.

But this we cannot think of putting these poor People to; nor if you would put them to it, would they be able to undergo it. Now you can send them thither in no other Capacity; and in either of these you ruin them: If you send them to plant, they will starve themselves; if you send them to work, they'll starve the Masters.

It is alledg'd, there are great Tracts of Land in *Jamaica* unplanted, and a great Want of People to plant them——And this is true; but I appeal to any Man that has lived on the Spot——Whether this will reach the present Case. For,

1. If you send People with Stocks, and Servants to plant in *Jamaica*, that can subsist upon their Funds, till the Plantations of *Cocoa* and other Trees are grown, till the Ginger comes to Perfection, and the Canes grow——They may do well; and *Jamaica* does really want a thousand such Families, who would soon grow rich there. But,
2. If you send poor People, whose Estate is the Clothes on their Backs; whose Inheritance is their Hands and their Day.

Day-Labour; that cannot live till they build Houses, nor subsist till the Plants grow. If you send such, they must starve, neither will the Land in *Jamaica*, tho' very fertile, feed them, unless Stocks as well as Lands are given them to live on.

3. Again, suppose they could just live there, they could neither buy Flower or Flesh, Clothes or Household Necessaries, which all come from abroad, till after some Years Labour for one another, or for others, as Slaves in the Islands.

The Case on the Continent differs exceedingly, where the Land is given them

Grain; One Penny an Acre is the first Demand, and not that at first; where the Woods are full of Cattle, wild and tame, Provisions unaccountably cheap, and Labour dear, and yet easy. — A diligent Hand will here presently subsist it self, and every Year grow more able to do so; the Land presently produces Corn, Garden-Stuff, &c. and upon enclosing and curing Grass for Cows, and so Milk for Sustenance; the Climate is healthy, and the Woods supply the Stranger with Abundance of Helps for Life; in the Islands, they are burnt up with Heat, sickly to Extremity, Provisions scarce and dear; and to send these poor Strangers thither, would be to ruin them all.

MISCELLANEA.

THE Subject above leads me of Course, to what I propos'd before, to speak to, relating to *Scotland*, *Viz.* Whether the Improving of the Land in *Scotland* be the readiest and best Course of enriching that Country.

And I must needs answer in the Affirmative, and doubt not to prove, that all the Poverty of *Scotland*, tho' that is more talk'd of than real too, proceeds from a Want of improving the Lands in *Scotland* to the Degree, they may and ought to be improv'd.

I shall not at present meddle with that difficult Question, Why the Lands in *Scotland* are not improv'd? I shall speak plainly of that by it self; but I am first to examine, whether this be the real Grievance or no?

—It is evident by the Cess or Land-Tax, if there were no other Demonstrations of it, that the whole Kingdom of *Scotland* is valu'd at no more Rent, than, according to our *4 s. Aid*, about 400000 *l. Sterling per An.* reckoning it rated one with another at about 2 *s. per l.* exactly collected —

The present Disaster of *Scotland* is, that the Lands, generally speaking, over the whole Kingdom, are given wholly up to the Plough; all the fertile Meadows and rich Pastures are plough'd up, even to the very Banks of the Rivers.

If in *England*, the Grasing or Pasture-Grounds, tho' of the same Goodness, are lett for five times as much as the plough'd Grounds, and, as it is plain, would be the same in *Scotland*; then, for all those Lands in *Scotland*, which might be converted into Pasture, but are left to the Plough, it is clear, they are not improv'd so much as they may be, by four Parts in five.

If this is put upon the whole Country in Proportion, then whenever *Scotland* comes to be rightly improv'd, the Value of the Rents in Land will rise to two Millions *Sterling per Annum* — Whether this be making *Scotland* rich or no, let any Man say.

But it will be readily thrown in my Way here, that this would be supposing all the arable or plough'd Lands of *Scotland* converted into Pasture — And what then should the People do for Corn? —

It is very natural to argue thus, and yet this is the Argument I desire in the Case, and it is answer'd, There are Millions of Acres of Land at this Time in *Scotland*, which really turn to no Account at all, except to help starve a few Sheep, which with good Husbandry and Industry would bear as good Corn, as the lower Lands of *Scotland* now do — So that what I propose for the